

Short-Term Rental Workshop
July 9, 2020
Verbal Comments
Via Zoom and Town of Rockport Livestream
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

The following comments were made by individuals regarding the proposal for the Town of Rockport to have an ordinance regulating short-term rentals. The meeting was led and monitored by Bill Post, Town Manager of Rockport. Everyone was given three minutes to state their position, and after all interested parties had spoken there was time given to those with additional commentary.

Jeff Hamilton
Full-time resident, Ledgewood Drive
Non-owner

I am strongly in favor of an ordinance being required and needed by the Town of Rockport. There are some excellent examples such as Freeport and others, where the ordinances are well laid-out. Part of the ordinance would require that short-term rentals be licensed or permitted by the town, and I've got several provisions that should be included in addition to the many that are several good examples of ordinances around the country. One being that the short-term rental complies and aligns with the Land Use Ordinance, for example in residential areas 904 in our Land Use Ordinance, settings such as boarding houses and bed and breakfasts require conditional use and those require Planning Board approval and I highly doubt that has been done now. Obviously in 904 residential areas, hotels and motels are not allowed at all. One big one out of this is that short-term rentals are not allowed in neighborhoods that have restrictive covenants that prohibit act of business activity, and there are several of those neighborhoods in town. Another provision should include the fact that the owners of short-term rentals be on premise, and that we do not have absentee renters. Off-street parking must be acceptable, and accommodate cars as needed. Another big one is that short-term rentals comply with the safety regulations very similar to those that are part of the licensed lodging business which include exit access, smoke detectors, carbon dioxides detectors, fire extinguishers up to electrical code, building codes, gas or electricity, the works. The space that is rented must be intended for that use such as a bedroom and not a barn loft with an air mattress. I would recommend that these areas be inspected by the Code Enforcement Officer or Fire Marshal and that those folks sign off on the permit before it's issued. Licenses have an annual fee subject to annual renewal, applies to the same rules as many of the other lodging industries such as, for example, the COVID-19 rules that come out if a lodge or a motel violates those as issued by the State they lose their license, short-term rental should be in the same boat. License can be pulled, fines levied for non-compliance—all the other types of best practices that are there. Limits on the number of occupants, there are several administrative things such as compliant affidavits, owner authorization forms that have

been used in other towns and work well. Proof of residence, and then there's the whole part about noise, firepits, no food-prep, those types of things. Again, those are all in several ordinances of a very similar nature, and other parts. Thank you.

Dominic Cordisco
Part-time resident
Owner, Pine Street

For those of you don't know me, my wife Amy and my son and I purchased a home in Rockport, we own a home on Pine Street, right down in the village near the harbor and we bought our home last year, and we've been renovating it ever since. We have been coming to Rockport for 15 years. We first owned a home on Spear Street, and we came there because we ourselves are short-term renters. We were able to experience Rockport and we have been coming back ever since and then when the opportunity came to us to be able to purchase a home there, that's what we did and we're happy that we did so and we consider ourselves to be members of the community even though we're not there full-time. We try to be there as much as we can, and we know and care for our neighbors. So, it is important to us to be members of the community. Also, we are short-term renters in the sense that we rent out our house. We renovated it and it is rented out, this season. It's rented for the summer and then we are returning in the fall, so it is rented for the high season. We made sure that all of our neighbors had our contact information and knew that we were renting it out. We wanted them to be able to contact use with any concerns or any disruptions that were happening whatsoever. I want to be clear that we are not opposed to the regulation of short-term rentals, by any stretch. I am a municipal attorney, we resided in Cornwall and Hudson in New York and the community that I represent here has also adopted a short-term rental regulation. It requires registration, which I think is important because the municipality, Rockport, should know contact information to get in touch with people in case that they are needed and also there is a public safety component to this, that there should be inspections to make sure that things are as they should be. But our house is a house and it's meant for families, we are renting to families, we are not allowing events, and hopefully we are renting to families so that they can explore and learn about Rockport the same way we did. So, like I said, we are not opposed to regulation, but we also want the ability to rent out our house like we rented out others. So, thank you.

Melissa and Jeffrey MacCoole
Full-time residents
Owners

Jeffrey and I are full-time residents of Rockport. He has lived here all his life and I have lived here most of mine. We do have a short-term rental; it is not in the neighborhood, so I don't fall into some of these other categories with any problems with parking or neighbors or anything like that. We have plenty of parking, we have had nothing in a year and a half but just the most congenial people and who just live being here and finding out all about Rockport. This is really the history of Rockport, we have been doing forever, renting out rooms, renting out houses for the summer to be workshops, then the furniture

and craftsman shops. PenBay Hospital has renters, we have had some anesthesiologists and respiratory therapists that have rented from us. There's just a long history here of short-term rentals in Rockport. Not really clear on why the need to regulate is here. I think there may be some people, John mentioned in the meeting last time that he originally had people that were not very nice or loud or whatever, and what it does to the community and what it does to the neighborhood. As I said I don't have that problem. But I don't agree with these short-term rentals versus long-term rentals. I don't think the short-term rentals in Rockport bring the community down at all because it's part of our history and because we have plenty of people who live here and buy big homes and then leave it in dark harbor all winter long. So I don't think we are interfering with anything with the longer term rentals, in fact, my husband and I have created five long-term rentals in the last couple of years and they have rented quickly and I'm sure we could rent a dozen more. I guess the biggest point I wanted to make is I'm not really clear on why we're going down this road of ordinances and regulations, not just because other town have it, but that seems to be a large part of the reason, that we feel this need to do this and I'm not sure that it's actually necessary.

John Viehman

Full-time resident, Pleasant Street

Non-owner

I would echo Jeff Hamilton's comments, I think that they are excellent. I also have been impacted greatly by the short-term rental situation. Just in the past couple of years we've experienced quite a bit of growth in short-term rentals: one across the street, one right next door. They're not bad rentals, they're not bad landlords or anything I'm not complaining about that sort of thing. Basically what it boils down to is a number of things, these are being operated essentially as businesses in a residential neighborhood and my point is that we to make a clear distinction between renting out a room and a full-time owner occupied residence from operating a free-standing business. I think we need to make different requirements and recognize them for what they are. The non-owner-occupied short-term rentals I think should be held to the same standard as motels, hotels, and B&Bs. I don't see any reason to not do that, including parking requirements. Probably the last point I would make, I think there was somebody commenting that they don't see why there's a need to engage on this topic, but there's a problem with affordable rentals in this town, which is not being helped by the fact that a lot of the properties are being turned into these short-term rentals because they can get higher rents for them, and they effectively take housing right off the market for people who otherwise would want to live in the area. Young families in particular.

Amy Jenner – no comment

Lisa Breheny – no comment

Lisa Morgan

Full-time resident

Recent non-owner of hosted STR

I had been doing Airbnb for quite a few years, that said I had just stopped doing it. So, I just stopped doing Airbnb, but I've had a wonderful experience, it has worked out really well. It has been able to provide me with the extra income really well, my daughter was in college and paying those college tuition bills. All in all, I think it was a great experience for me and as well I think it was for my neighbors, they didn't seem to have a problem. I have enough parking in my driveway. I just feel very fortunate that there was an opportunity for something like that and there's obviously a need. I kept my prices quite low because I liked to get young students, people coming for a night or two on their way up to Mount Desert. There's such a need for that given how expensive the hotels are coming up in the summer. It was a win-win situation. It worked for a lot of people who could not afford or even find a place to stay in the summer.

Alex Cohen – no comment

*Haunani and Doc Wallace
Full-time residents, 226 Union Street
Owners*

First of all, I want to say that while I really respect Jeff Hamilton as a Select Board member, I would be almost unalterably opposed to his view of how Rockport needs to go about this. One of the things that has really hurt this country is excessive government regulation. And no better example than we've seen in the last few years, that if you take regulation away, business thrives. And in a way we are tiny little small businesses. We have a unit, we've put our heart and soul into it, it's in the carriage house and I think we would probably be able to ride through any regulation because we're zoned as a two-family residence anyway, even our main house. But I'm just opposed to the kind of regulations that have been put in as a kind of example, Rockland, I think Rockland has become the poster child of how not to handle this issue. Let me just say that our taxes are high. I'm pretty familiar with taxes, I'm a former public-school superintendent in large systems and I feel that even our education taxes here are very, very high. And our taxes overall on our property are high. This is an opportunity here to have an Airbnb that will allow us to somewhat offset this. In the two years we've done this we've never received a single complaint. In fact, quite the contrary, we've had people write just glorious reviews of our property. Some people have said that they have done Airbnb's all over the world, one recently compared us to an Airbnb experience in Paris and said that it couldn't begin to compare it with what we have here. We're good for business, we send people to all the Rockport restaurants, we've got people that have come here and decided to live in Rockport as a result of living in our Airbnb.

We've got high taxes, I disagree with Jeff, I don't think we need excessive regulations, we run a very clean, very decent business, people love us, we're happy.

We also collect Maine sales tax and emit that when it's due and we also pay taxes on income for our rental. And regulation which would require a fee would just be another form of taxation, which we're already taxed enough.

Alison Peabody Southwell
Part-time resident
Owner, 21 Pleasant Street

I bought this house in a moment of reeling grief, a few months after my mother's sudden death. My family has been summering in Rockport since the 1890's and I love the town so much I couldn't possibly express it. My life is in such a way that there is no feasible way for me to live in my house full-time. I am an opera singer and I simply don't have the stability to be able to live there all the time. The renovation that I took to make the house comfortable for myself, because the lack of regulation in the State for contractors ended up costing me more than the cost of the house itself. Something like four times the estimate that I was given by a local contractor and that financial stream was enormous. It has forced me to seek out short-term rentals on Airbnb to an extent that I did not initially anticipate when I bought the house. But the only way I can get to enjoy it or be there or hope to retire there is if I can rent it, so that I can be there in the part of the year that I am able to be there. And that's really my only concern, is that if there's a regulation that makes it so that I can enjoy the time that I love so much in the house that I made for myself, full of my mother's memory, that would be really heartbreaking.

I haven't received any complaints from anyone, even my lovely neighbors. Obviously, we all had concerns with COVID and took every legal step we could to protect our guests and our community. I don't know, I just wish that I knew more about what the concerns were from the community about maintaining these short-term rentals when we so seriously vet our guests ourselves.

Marsha Steinglass
Full-time resident, 1 Ship Street
Owner

I have lived here since 1973 in the same spot. If you use the definition of a dwelling unit that contains the expression for short-term rental that Camden uses, which is no less than 7 days, I do not do short-term rentals. So, I'm going to read some numbers down first and I'll try to do it quickly because I know I only have three minutes. \$21, 720. \$84, 595. \$33, 360. \$42, 856. \$10, 276. These are examples of the real estate taxes in the Town of Rockport. Why do people do short-term rentals? They have to. It is the only way they can keep their homes in many circumstances. There's a person who lives on Amesbury Hill in Rockport whose ancestors gave the most beautiful sand beach to the town, and she needs to do short-term rentals to keep her family home. The same thing with Vic and with me. We want to keep our home; we want to pass it on to our children. Sometimes, we have to do rentals to make sure we can pay our real estate taxes, which have multiplied 30 times since we first came here to live in Rockport and settled here. One thing I would caution, the Select Board and the Town of Rockport, if you want to pass legislation regarding short-term rentals, keep in mind what the Zoning Code Enforcement Officer said to me in Camden: it will be a bear to legislate. Not only that, it will include surveillance and enforcement, which will cost the town money and use more time of the Town Office employees who already seem pretty well stretched out. The bottom line is if

you have an issue with a neighbor, talk, work it out. We have enough of us and them in our world. It's actually destroying our country. Let's stop it and let's not waste more time finding a solution to a nonexistent problem. Thank you.

Olivia Berez – no comment

Felicia Giordano

Part-time resident, Warrenton Street

Owner

I live on Warrenton Street in Rockport. Around me on this street there's a gentleman who lives on Vinalhaven. I have two homes across the street that operate under the umbrella of the Claddagh Motel. Next door, they left the home to go into foreclosure and they left the property unmaintained, we had waist-high grass and rodents. So, I bought the property to use as a short-term rental to ensure that I have the right kind of neighbors next to me. So, I don't live in the house, but I am right next door. We utilize the existing codes for noise, trash, and parking. We help keep the neighborhood in check. Short-term rental hosts, citizens need to support their local community. We send our guests to local restaurants, retail shops, and local sites. We are private residential properties, we don't have staff coming and going, restaurants, or multiple doors for various guest groups. In most areas, vacation rentals take up a very small percentage of housing stocks. 1 out of 10 hosts is a teacher. 58 percent of hosts are women. Vacation rentals significantly contribute to local economies through property taxes and referrals to other businesses. I would be greatly concerned if Rockport is going to start to exercise additional mandates about short-term rentals and one of them concerning that there is not enough long-term rental property. When I first bought the property, I had a long-term renter in there who defaulted on her lease and she left before I had already started to evict her. It's a lot different being a landlord than it is to be a host for short-term renters who are happy to be in the area. I just don't believe that we need to regulate short-term rentals just because the towns around us are doing so and there are many properties in the area where homes are creating short-term rentals but under the umbrella of being owned by hotels. Warrenton Street is a very good example of that. So, I would appreciate also knowing what the town is thinking, because we come into this meeting with a missing link and we're responding in generalities, without knowing exactly what we're dealing with. I would invite anyone to come see my short-term rental, I've never had a complaint. The people are very quiet and very well-behaved and they're well-vetted.

Glen Main

Full-time resident

Owner (semi-hosted, close proximity)

I have a short-term rental; I really don't care to disclose. The inspections, taxations, monetary gain by the city, as far as I'm concerned, they have no investment. Although I can see how by the inspections, they can charge fees. The selectmen seem like they know all the rules and regulations here, it wasn't posted in a public forum such as a newspaper as what may or may not be proposed. The thing is, there are homes, well I'll make

reference to a comment that was made, as far as young families needing homes in Rockport. There are many, many homes in Rockport that through federal and state grants, they could go in and fix them up and make those homes available, rather than let them dilapidate. However, has a private owner, we invest the money, we stimulate the economy, not only state-wide but county and city. We offer gift certificates to guests, they get accustomed to the restaurants, which in turn pay more taxes to the state, the county, and the city. So, that taxation within itself generates many dollars for the city of Rockport. If the city wants to come in and regulate and that is passed, that means my fees go up. Which means I would probably have to sell my unit and that would stay vacant over the winter, with nobody coming in to purchase food from local restaurants—more taxes of course—and more than likely it would be from an out-of-stater. So that house would still unavailable for those in poverty and as I said before, there are federal and state grants where some of these grants could fixed up to accommodate those in need.

Kelly Hokkanen – no comment

Justin Ford – no comment

David Dickey – no comment

Marika Kuzma – no comment

Steven Stinson – no comment

Douglas Wall

Part-time resident

Owner, 9 Central Street

I happen to live in Harrison, Maine. My brother Robert and is a nurse practitioner in the area, and I'm a retired high school math teacher. Rob and I inherited this property from Mary and Warren Wall in 2014. They grew up in Rockport and Camden and came back upon retirement. He purchased the Central Street House in the mid-80's and rebuilt it with the help of local carpenter Charlie Duncan. My family has deep roots in the Midcoast area, dating back from the 1700's. My brother and I want to keep the house to have a place to come back to from time to time. We found, though, that the property taxes at about \$7,600 and home insurance at \$1,400 have made it necessary to rent the property. We do this from June to October. We advertise our home through VRBO or HomeAway, which charges us an annual fee of \$500. My sister-in-law, Ruth, manages the booking and the cleaning and greets the people coming in. I handle the books and both families do the upkeep during the spring and the fall. This year, again this is a public record this is why I am saying this, this year we have six rentals booked for a week or more. One couple was renting the house for 18 days and another couple is renting for two weeks. Both rentals are for nights each. All these people are incredibly excited about vacationing in Rockport and support many of the restaurants and shops in the area. They don't hesitate to spend money; it certainly helps us. We have been blessed to have this property and hope to continue to be able to rent it in the future. I'd like to think the Town

of Rockport will continue to let us rent our home. I'm not sure what problem short-term rentals have created, but I can assure you, the renters of our property have been respectful to the neighbors and have given Rockport rave reviews. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak.

*Benjamin and Wintor Lantz
Full-time resident, West Rockport
Owner*

We are in a residential zone in West Rockport near Rockville. We sit on about three acres; we have no covenants on our property and we certainly don't have a problem with off-street parking. We've been renting a short-term rental for a little over three years now. We haven't had any complaints, when we've talked to neighbors about it, they weren't even aware that we were doing that. So, we're not sure why, what need was identified for this to come up other than our neighbors on either side of ourselves have been discussing it. I certainly could understand that there might be some need for life and safety code, fire regulation, that sort of thing and we wouldn't necessarily oppose that. However, for us, we actually have a mother-in-law that was built with intention being used as a mother-in-law when the house was constructed and when bought the property, our intent was to probably use it as short-term vacation rental when we didn't have our mother staying here with us. That offset allows to be able to continue to keep up our home the way that we would like to here. We're not a boarding home, we're not a bed and breakfast, and I would make sure that people are very careful if they are considering proposals that they don't use terminology such as "neighborhoods" and "boarding houses" and things like that without a very clear understanding of what that means to different zones and different locations within Rockport. A lot of the people that come and stay with us are families. They are looking for a different experience, they are looking for a full kitchen, laundry, a separate garage, they are looking for a different type of experience. So, we're not competing directly with the same experience they would get staying in a lodging directly downtown or in a waterfront type situation. They do support local businesses, they're here on vacation and they're spending dollars. We make it more affordable so they can spend their dollars at other venues around town. We are paying our state lodging taxes and we pay taxes on that. If we were not doing short-term vacation rental, our unit would not be available for a regular tenancy. It is much different to handle short-term vacation rentals than it is regular tenants and I would hope that if Rockport moves forward there be real clear communication about that. We learned about this forum from a family member who lives out of state. So, it would be nice to be able to follow the progress on this.

*Tim Montague
Part-time resident
Owner, 24 Pleasant Street*

Speaking: Sue Howard, agent at Shelter Cover Property Management

[Tim] was not able to be a part of the meeting tonight but he definitely wanted to take part. He does have a short-term rental at 24 Pleasant Street, it is his vacation home when he's here and when he's not here, I handle finding guests to stay. We just wanted to say a few things because he has gone to some extensive renovations and property improvements that absolutely beautified the home and in doing that, helped all of the neighbor's property values because he's caring for something that was not cared for previously. As far as things like traffic, there's no more traffic up and down the street when a guest is staying there than when he is staying there himself. Like everyone else has said, people staying there bring their dollars from out of state and they support the local economy, they go to restaurants, they go to shops. We, again, pay our lodging taxes to the State of Maine. I think one of the interesting things that no one has brought up is that anything on Airbnb or VRBO, HomeAway is all reviewed by the guests online. If it is a terrible place, if things are falling apart or lacking, these people are not shy about commenting on it, which keeps all of us who are advertising our places on those sites really on our toes because these properties have got to be taken care of, or else you won't find anyone to rent them because there will just be all these negative comments and no one would want to stay there. So really, these properties are probably more well taken care of than properties that are not rented as short-term rental because we have that guidance of the internet and everyone has access to all of the comments that people put on there. The other comment I wanted to make is that people have brought up the fact that if these short-term rentals were not being rented in this manner to make top dollar, that they might be used for the shortage of long-term rentals in the area, which couldn't be further from the truth because by the time you put the money into improving a property to get it to the caliber of some of these short-term rentals, you could not get it in the rentals market. People would be forced to sell as opposed to just making them long-term rentals for a lot less money. I also hope that if this goes through, any of this legislation, some of this could be considered to be grandfathered in, since these people who have already spent the money to improve their property are now looking to recoup some of it. Thank you.

Lisa Kawenski
Full-time resident
Owner, South Street

My husband and I bought the house when it was in foreclosure and we fixed it up. We tried to do long-term rentals for probably about three years, but we found that we were getting renters in there and they were destroying the house. After three years I had lost my job and decided that I would do a short-term rental and I can do it all myself. I do the bookings, I do the cleaning, it is a whole house by itself. We live in Camden and are only 5 minutes away, so I drive by the house multiple times in a day to check on it to make sure that the guests are there and that there is not any problems. I don't understand why there's a need to regulate either. That's it.

Ruth Wall
Part-time resident
Owner, 9 Central Street

I am Doug Wall's sister-in-law, he already spoke. I am the person that does the welcoming at the house on Central Street. It's a place that Doug and his brother, my husband, really wanted to hang on to after their parents death and it was not a place that we didn't want to have fully occupied by a long-term rental. We just didn't want to take the chance of having someone that we weren't going to be happy with long-term and I already had experience in short-term rental in another at state. So, I, too, don't feel that there's anything that needs to be regulated. Our taxes are paid to the town and state lodging taxes are figured and paid. Mostly retirees come to our place and so it's quiet. I don't think I have anything else to say thank you.

Roslyn Morr-Marc – no comment

Clare Tully

Full-time resident, 31 Main Street

Owner

I have two units and I do offer an Airbnb in the summer, but in the offseason, I do make the house available for people working the maritime industry and other industries. So, some short-term rental properties are available in the offseason and do provide affordable housing. I guess I want to say that I'm kind of surprised by what I've been hearing on this call because I did think that this was preliminary, and this is how it had been conveyed to us but clearly, we've got a member of the Select Board and a member of the Planning Board on this call that feel very strongly about it. Sounds like their minds are made up and it sounds like some drafting has already been done. So that's a little concerning that the public has not really been kept up to date with what is happening. It sounds like it's really quite more than that. Again, like many people on the call I understand that there really have not been noise and safety issues involving short-term rentals and if there are, there are ways to address them rather than getting into very excessive regulation of them. So that's unfortunate that that's the direction that things are headed in. It appears to be motivated by special interests that want to protect their businesses. It's especially disappointing to hear this in the wake of the approval of a 26 suite luxury hotel with a rooftop bar in our tiny downtown, that homeowners who rely on rental income to pay their taxes or just send their kids to college will potentially be subject to this kind of regulation. I mean, some regulation might well be in order, but excessive risk regulation? No. Also, clearly short-term rentals are very attractive to tourists and the short-term rental industry is growing just like them. They're affordable for tourists, so it seems shortsighted when we talk about making a town available to business and attracting businesses, that we would try and curtail this at a time when it's very popular. Why wouldn't you want to give tourists what they are seeking? Particularly that age group, between 25 to 44 who later buy houses here, literally relocate here. And a lot of us came here because we initially had short-term rentals ourselves, so it seems it's cutting that out and no more recruiting younger people that we need for our workforce and to add to our tax base. So, I would just encourage the town to be more transparent about this and also be considerate of the fact that we're taxpayers too. It shouldn't just be the big developers who get the ear of the town, it should be people that need to use their homes to generate a little income

and have been doing this for decades and decades, going back to lodging houses in the '30s.

Todd Patstone

Part-time resident, 200 Main Street

Non-owner

I guess I'm a part-time resident of 200 Main Street and I grew up in that house, a fourth generation Simonton. That house has been in our family since the turn of the century. My mom passed away a few months ago, my brother and I now own the property and we're trying to figure out you know how we can keep it. We want to have the ability to come back, but not full-time even though I live in the state. So, I'm just in particular opposed to any sort of full-time owner occupancy regulations. I think that that's really my point. We want to maintain flexibility in what we can do with the properties so that we can continue to visit. That's all I have, thank you.

Additional Comments

Doc Wallace

I hope the Board of Selectmen reviews this and sees that there is an overwhelming support for short term rentals. I would say that there's a pretty strong support for not imposing strong regulations. As I've said, Rockland did it wrong, I hope Rockport doesn't fall into that category. I think AirBnB is a very different experience from motels and hotels, so that's another argument, we interact with other people, we talk and then we take them on tours. There is a service that is provided by AirBnB, it doesn't come close to the in the classic hotel bed and breakfast situation and on top of the fact that a lot of people here have said that their taxes are high and they're doing this service, it's good for Rockport, it's good for Maine and it helps people meet their tax obligation. I hope that the Board of Selectmen hears that loud and clear.

Glen Main

I think this is more monetarily generated as far as codes inspections without city, county, or state having any investment in the property. I also believe that if the shortcomings of the city need to be looked at, as far as financial coffers, I apologize but it seems like the short-terms are going to be stuck with unnecessary fees while existing laws, regulations, and rules are on the books. That being said, I think this is more of an issue from what little that has been made available to the short-term rentals, the owners. This is kind of like the poverty stricken members in the community that need full-time housing which again, I would like to specify that I cannot do a full-time rental because there is too much liability, too much investment to maintain that property on a full-time basis. That being said, that property would probably be sold to whoever could buy it outright.

Marsha Steinglass

I just want to say very briefly that you seem to be concentrating or asking people whether they are on site when they have a tenant, and I just want everyone to realize that I am not going to put someone in my home and disappear for a month. I go by every day, and other people do too, and make sure everything is safe and sound, whether I'm on the property or not it's my responsibility take care of it. Thank you.

Clare Tully

Just wanted to add about this issue of host being on site, I mean I am on site and a lot of other hosts are on site, but I think having a someone suggesting that there should be a requirement that owners be onsite I think that discriminates against second homeowners who don't live here full-time. They have property rights too, they're taxpayers, and they use fewer services than a lot of we do. I send my kids to the public schools here, a lot of them don't, and I think that this will really discourage people from buying homes here because not everyone can afford to carry the costs of a second home without having any revenue generated from that. I think it's ironic because the town is very protective of property rights with Stuart Smith other big developers and I don't think that the town should favor big developers and special interests at the expense of residents who need this income to remain in their homes or to someday retire here if they live off site. So, it's really unfortunate to see it. I think its anti-business and I think it's shortsighted. It also doesn't look at the tourism trends and what tourists want. And Maine, we are a state that is about tourism, so why would we want to make Rockport less available to tourists? It just doesn't make sense if we say we want to be business friendly. Thank you.

Benjamin and Wintor Lantz

Just wanted to circle back around and make sure that we were clear on our position on a possible owner occupancy requirement. Obviously, we do live on site, but we are definitely opposed to an owner occupancy requirement. I don't see any reason why these properties haven't been and can't be properly managed by out of state parties. And they're obviously going to be using local supports for cleaning and yard maintenance and property maintenance and there are eyes and on it. I know we have a lot invested, none of the homeowners you've heard from tonight are saying that they are not financially very invested in this and are trying to protect their investment. In that way, a lot of us aren't renting to long-term residents because we've been burned by long-term rentals and it's a it's a different type of business. They're all furnished and well taken care of and we need to keep them that way. Also, I want to make sure that in considering any possible regulations that we really consider the impact on the real estate market that any of these changes might bring. A lot of people come here, they love it here, they summer here, they buy a home here with the intention of becoming a full-time resident but they're not at that stage in their life yet. They have the intention of buying it, using it for their use at this time and when they're not here by being able to afford that by renting it in their absence. I think that might be a hard impact it could have on the real estate market if we make that type of opportunity unavailable to perspective buyers. Okay, thank you.

Felicia Giordano

In 2009, I purchased my first home in Rockport after coming around here for the past 38 years and loving the place. It was a dream come true for Maine and I lived through the neighbors from hell who allowed the property next door to me to be foreclosed upon. I jumped at the opportunity to take it in hand myself and whip it into shape and keep it in tip top shape along with my own to satisfy the needs of us. The main reason I wanted to speak again was because I wasn't sure if I had clarified the fact that I am presently a part-time resident and I'm paying taxes on my home plus the short-term rental home that I have right next door to me and it's kind of interesting, something in favor of people not being on site for short-term renters. I like to make provisions for the fact that I don't allow the people who are staying in my home to know that I'm next door, so they are always very quiet very well behaved. No parties, no noise. I appreciate the opportunity to being able to speak here because as a part-time resident I'm paying full-time resident taxes on two properties. I'm not utilizing any of the services of the town yet the town gets to keep all of my taxes and it concerns me, the fact that the town wants to try to regulate something that I have done because of my love of the area and yet I will not have a voice in the November election even though I am here much of the time. So, I appreciate this venue and being kept abreast here and being able to share my feelings and viewpoints and I hope that you continue to do so. Is there are there any more meetings planned like this?

Bill: We haven't gotten that far yet so at currently there aren't, but there may be depending on what ends up happening.

John Viehman

I just want to clarify, because somebody commented that because I happen to be a volunteer on the Planning Board that somehow, I'm representing the Planning Board. I'm representing my own opinion on this and as a resident who's been greatly impacted by the emergence of the short-term rental phenomenon. This is not people that have historically been renting out rooms in their homes or operated successfully rental units on the property that they own. Just in the time that I've lived on the street, there's been four new short-term rentals pop up and this is only barely a two-block long street. So, to say that I can't have an opinion and be able to participate in this as a resident of Rockport or that there's some kind of an agenda, I really resent that. Thank you.

Melissa MacCoole

I just wanted to bring up two points again, one is the long history, 100 years or more, of rentals, short-term rentals, in the town of Rockport. Forever in a day and it's been done just fine with no regulations. I do feel bad for John, if you have that many short-term rentals around that could be hard but we've been renting in Rockford to the music colony, the art colony, the hospital, I'm repeating myself but at this point there's been a long history here with no regulations and we've done just fine. I'm really against any regulations at all at this point. And I am a full-time resident, we have 5 full-time year-

round rentals as well as one Airbnb, so we are supplying the market all the way around. Thank you for your time.

Glen Main

Something else I would like to see is the proposal by Selectmen and elected officials as to any proposal being placed in the newspaper, so that everybody knows before they go into the forum exactly what they are facing. I apologize I felt a little bit blindsided by this whole thing because not enough information was available for the people that had the investment in the properties, that pay the taxes, that stimulate the economy locally.

Bill: We are only gathering information at this point.

Glen: I know, but when the proposals are made, they should be made public so that you have an idea of exactly the intention Other elected officials as to what's going on and what their intentions are

Benjamin and Winton Lantz

Winton: We're just curious how many people are behind this, that are driving this because now with the meeting it sounds like there was something back in September and maybe something before then, like there's already been Town resources spent towards an effort of regulatory requirement consideration at least. And whether or not Jeff on his own time has worked with drafting some stuff and he's not using Select Board time to do that, that's not really clear but we'll just assume that it's his own personal time that he's doing that as a resident, but now were spending town dollars and time so I'm just wondering, what was the decision point at which point we committed to spend dollars? At tonight's meeting we're hearing a lot of people saying that they're not for regulation at this point in time so I'm assuming there must be as many coming to the Select Board that are saying they are requesting regulation so that we can justify moving forward or to hold these kind of talks. Could you explain to us what the background is because this is the first, we heard about it, we were kind of blindsided, so we're trying to get up to speed.

Bill: This started with the workshop, as you referenced, last fall we held a workshop for the first time and the intent of that was to continue having workshops and receiving comments. When we were able to pick this topic back up, mid-pandemic, is where we stand now. So, it's been a topic that's been on the radar of the Select Board for a while. I can't tell you how long because, again, I started last August 1st as the manager here, so that's all the information I can give you on that.

Winton: That's what I'm saying, what justification have we had so far to devote these resources to it?

Bill: Again, I don't have the back story from the previous management, so good question.

Benjamin: Okay, yeah, I think it's very important to understand the driver in all this because I'm spending my time, my wife is, I know everyone the call is. These are a lot of allocated resources that we're having on this meeting and so when we're not understanding driver for this, it would be really nice to have that transparency.

Alison Peabody-Southwell

I just wanted to ask if maybe Diane or someone could create a mailing list to keep the people who registered for this Zoom involved. The only reason I found out about it was because Marsha [Steinglass] wrote me about it but otherwise I would never have known and it's obviously very important to me. Would it be possible to have some kind of a mailing list created from the emails to create this meeting?

Bill: Yes, I will. As I said a little bit earlier as long as I have everybody's emails, which I do from getting this invite, we will certainly can send out information that we have on the topic when it comes along. So, I will do that, it'll probably come from Diane Hamilton's email address, so everybody is aware.

Melissa MacCoole

One tiny little thing, I'm sorry, some of the confusion I think may have come from that June 5th article. It was in the paper where it had the timelines put up, that just went from one bullet point to the next to the next to the next and it ended up with something on the ballot for the November election and we were like whoa, wait a minute.

Bill: Yes, I can explain that a little bit. So anytime that we have to draft anything that would go to the voters for a vote it's important that we put together some sort of a timeline like that because we have to meet so many deadlines and requirements for public hearings and public notices. So that was put together at the request of the Select Board, to put together a timeline to say if we were to draft something what would it look like, where would we stand, what dates would be lined up. And we only have generally a couple of times during the year that we would go to the voters with things, such as June and November, so that's why that timeline was put together.